

Restoring balance through reintegration

WE ARE AN ARMY THAT REMAINS OUT OF BALANCE WITH A FEW MORE TOUGH YEARS AHEAD OF US. FORTUNATELY, WE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS WITH THE HELP OF OUR DEPARTMENTAL AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. WE'VE EXPANDED OUR FORCE AND TRANSFORMED IT TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE TYPES OF CONFLICTS WE ARE FIGHTING TODAY. TODAY THE ARMY IS 70,000 PEOPLE LARGER THAN IT WAS JUST FIVE YEARS AGO ... 40,000 PEOPLE LARGER THAN IT WAS JUST TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO ... WITH 11 MORE COMBAT BRIGADES AND SUBSTANTIALLY MORE ENABLING FORCES. WE ARE BETTER POSITIONED NOW — THAN WE WERE TWO YEARS AGO — TO ACCEPT SOME INCREASED DEMAND, BUT WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET."

GENERAL GEORGE W. CASEY, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY

By LTC Michael T. Morrissey

The current war is the longest the U.S. has conducted with an all-volunteer force. Conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan continue as the president recently announced the decision to send an additional 34,000 troops to Afghanistan. Beyond Iraq, Afghanistan, well-known threats from global terrorism, China and North Korea, there are also insidious dangers to the U.S. that threaten to destabilize the security of national interests in ways that would require substantial U.S. military involvement beyond the current commitment. They include unconventional threats; political extremism, toxic anti-American populism, nuclear proliferation and expanding political and economic vulnerability (See "Toward a Risk Management Defense Strategy" a study by Nathan P. Freier).

General Casey appropriately explained the future as one of persistent conflict, "a period of protracted confrontation among states, non-states and individual actors, that are increasingly willing to use violence to achieve their political and ideological ends," in his statement before the House Committee on Appropriations, Military Construction, Veteran's Affairs and Related Agencies on May 6, 2009. In this demanding environment, the Army plays an essential role protecting national interests and American freedoms. As an experienced

force provider, General Campbell, U.S. Forces Command commander, aptly explained the challenge in this environment, "While in a persistent conflict, we continue to generate forces in a condition where the global demand for land forces exceeds the available supply. Despite this, our nation and the combatant commanders expect the Army to produce a sustained supply of trained and ready forces and since 2003, we have met those expectations." (See General Charles C. Campbell's article "ARFORGEN: Maturing the Model, Refining the Process," in the June 2009 edition of *Army Magazine*.) The combined effects of an extended war along with insufficient recovery time for personnel and families have resulted in readiness consumption at an unsustainable rate impacting strategic flexibility and causing symptoms at the Soldier and family level.

Symptoms. While the Army has a combat-experienced force like no other time in its history, the demand has taken a personal toll. In 2007, Casey explained the Army was not broken, but out of balance. Although there appears to be little research on the subject indicating a link between an extended war with insufficient recovery time and a negative impact on Soldiers and families, fissures in the force's human dimension are evident. Since January 2009, 211 Soldiers, active and reserve, are suspected to have committed suicide (See Ann Scott Tyson's article "Army's Record

Suicide Rate 'Horrible,' General Says" in the *Washington Post*). Up from 128 in 2008, the steady increase during the last four years does not have a direct correlation to the long war, but is believed to be a symptom. Despite the many programs designed to help struggling married couples cope with deployment, the military divorce rate was 3.6 percent for fiscal year 2009, an increase from previous years according to Pauline Jelinek in his Associated Press article "Military Divorces Increasing from War Stress." In addition, in his *USA Today* article "Alcohol Abuse by GIs Soars Since '03," Greg Zoroya states, "The rate of Army Soldiers enrolled in treatment programs for alcohol dependency or abuse has nearly doubled since 2003 — a sign of the growing stress of repeated deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Army statistics and interviews."

Approximately 20 percent of returning veterans also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or depression (See, "Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery," a study by Terri Tanielian and Lisa H. Jaycox, RAND Corporation). Finally, Rand Corporation released another study, "The Experience of Children from Military Families," on 7 December 2009, which only begins to address the symptoms of extended, multiple deployments on families such as increased emotional difficulties.

Multiple deployments and extended separations with insufficient recovery time incur a mental toll and cause wounds that are not easily visible. Suicide, divorce, substance abuse and behavioral health issues clearly do not define our great Army institution. Although each case is unacceptable, they are but a small percentage compared to the overall force. However, they are symptoms of an Army out of balance and have the potential to proliferate and erode readiness.

Restoring balance. Army leadership is working aggressively to address the complex challenge of rebalancing the force, while keeping its dominant edge in the 21st century. Restoring balance requires a comprehensive approach, including increasing Army end strength, transitioning from a garrison-based, Cold War operational set to an expeditionary force, transforming to modular brigade formations, realigning bases and implementing the Army Force Generation model. In addition, our leadership's commitment to end Stop Loss and 15 month deployments plus increase boots on the ground-dwell time to (1 year deployed and 2 years at home for active units and 1 year deployed and 4 years at home for the Reserve Component) is having an effect and, ultimately, will help reduce stress on the force.

Equally important, restoring balance requires a focus on Soldiers and families, a concerted effort to reduce the mental and physical toll of a committed expeditionary Army. On March 26, 2007, Secretary of the Army Preston M. "Pete" Geren approved implementation of the Deployment Cycle Support Directive, which codifies the need for deploying Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians to receive the opportunity for personal reconstitution, family reunion/reintegration and reestablishment of personal readiness. In the last few years, Congressional, Department of Defense and Army leaders committed resources and implemented programs to restore the wellbeing of Soldiers and families. In October 2007, Secretary Geren and General Casey unveiled the Army Family Covenant, an incredible pledge that codifies renewed support to Army families.

The Army recently instituted a Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program to build resiliency and prepare Soldiers better for the challenges associated with multiple deployments. Family life counselors and resiliency teams are now within brigades to deal with mental fitness proactively. The Army's in-depth suicide awareness campaign also is beginning to show positive signs. On December 9, 2009, the Vice

Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter W. Chiarelli, directed leaders to address behavioral health support during initial and subsequent performance counseling.

These are just a few of the many programs, and it is heartening to see the investment and commitment. However, programs and policies alone will not restore nor recover Soldiers and families. Ultimately, rebalancing the all-volunteer force rests on dedicated leaders at all levels, conducting detailed planning and focused execution to ensure these programs are used and achieve their objectives. Easy answers and effortless solutions will not suffice. Restoring balance requires an appreciation of the challenge at hand. It requires dedication and follow through on a key component of restoring balance — reintegration. This article focuses on Soldier/family reintegration and proposes a holistic approach beginning when a unit is notified.

Before deployment. To set conditions for successful reintegration, preparation begins when a unit is notified of a deployment. Soldier and family readiness programs must be planned and executed with the same detail and command emphasis as pre-deployment training. Approximately 56 percent of the force is married, so incorporate family-related activities into the road to war training plan. Commanders

must identify caring, dependable volunteers to lead unit family readiness groups. Early identification allows for these volunteers to attend necessary training and begin the team-building process within their battery family and across the battalion. Schedule regular sessions where the volunteers come together to share ideas and information.

Establish commander's intent early so there are no misunderstandings during the deployment. Empower and provide family readiness group leaders with the information they need to be successful; a simple technique of alerting a family readiness group leader of new arrivals goes a long way toward integration. Command presence at family readiness group events is a must, but understand when the group may want to meet without "green-suiters." Without command emphasis, you'll find little support from subordinates. In addition, battalion commanders must select a dependable family readiness support assistant early. Don't be confused, the family readiness support assistant does not run the program; he or she supports the command team, family readiness group and families. When done right, a family readiness support assistant is an amazing resource.

As part of planning and preparation, commanders, in conjunction with their family readiness support assistant, schedule Army Community Service programs such



PFC Jon Moss kisses his two-month-old daughter, Chloe, goodbye following his deployment ceremony at Fort Sill, Okla., Dec. 7, 2009. (Photo by Jason Kelly, *Fires Bulletin*)

as “Building Family Resiliency,” “Cycles of Stress” and “Stress Management” for Soldier and families. These events allow Soldiers and loved ones to begin preparation and realize the emotions they’re feeling are normal. They also encourage discussion on important topics such as finances, power of attorney and child care. Include children in family programs when appropriate. You’d be amazed at the benefit of children discussing their own ranges of emotions.

A conscious effort must be made to ensure spouses understand the Army casualty notification process. Single parent Soldiers or dual military parents must decide who they want to care for their children during the deployment. Once their family care plan is complete, the commander must call the designated provider and confirm to validate the plan. In support of information flow, a simple technique is for the command team to mail each family a personal letter addressing the importance of family readiness and highlighting upcoming unit family events. Besides ensuring the widest information dissemination, a personal letter will confirm or deny whether or not the unit has accurate addresses.

Activities should not be simply instructional. Successful teams will plan and resource Soldier/family cohesion events to draw out families and build a sense of camaraderie. These events are important, developing trust and allowing spouses to establish relationships with other spouses and share concerns. Done right, unit events, such as BBQs, picnics, dinners and fall festivals to name a few, nest well with information related briefs. Finally, be patient, but persistent. It may take a while to draw young families into unit activities. It is important for families to attend pre-deployment activities so they understand the many resources available to them and how to prepare for the deployment separation. For some Soldiers, there may be a belief, “my spouse is not in the Army; I don’t want her involved.” Attack this mindset head on, not as an invasion of privacy, but simply to support family readiness and prevent potential problems later.

Leaders, first-line supervisors through commanders, should have accurate information on families within their units: first or multiple deployers, Exceptional Family Member Program, families intent on remaining local during the deployment or moving back home, English as a second

language and whether or not the spouse has a driver’s license. Encourage the Soldier and spouse to discuss and establish goals during the deployment such as financial and educational. This will give them a common aim to strive for and encourage discussion. Early family preparation pays big dividends for a successful reintegration and mission accomplishment. As then-Army Chief of Staff, General John A. Wickham explained in his white paper titled, “The Army Family,” if a Soldier is worried about his family, he’s not focused on the mission; a healthy family environment allows Soldiers to concentrate fully on their mission.

Although the bulk of this discussion deals with married Soldiers and families, equally plan for and prepare single Soldiers. Monitor “at risk” Soldiers and families especially as the deployment date draws closer. Additional stress may cause a regrettable incident if preventive measures are not in place. Finally, organize and stand the rear detachment up within a month or two of notification, so the commander and command sergeant major can coach the leaders and establish clear expectations.

“Communication throughout deployment does not guarantee an easy deployment or reintegration, but it can facilitate success.”

Selecting the rear detachment command team will be an important choice; only the commander and command sergeant major will really know if the right choice was made or if they simply assumed risk and took all the stars forward.

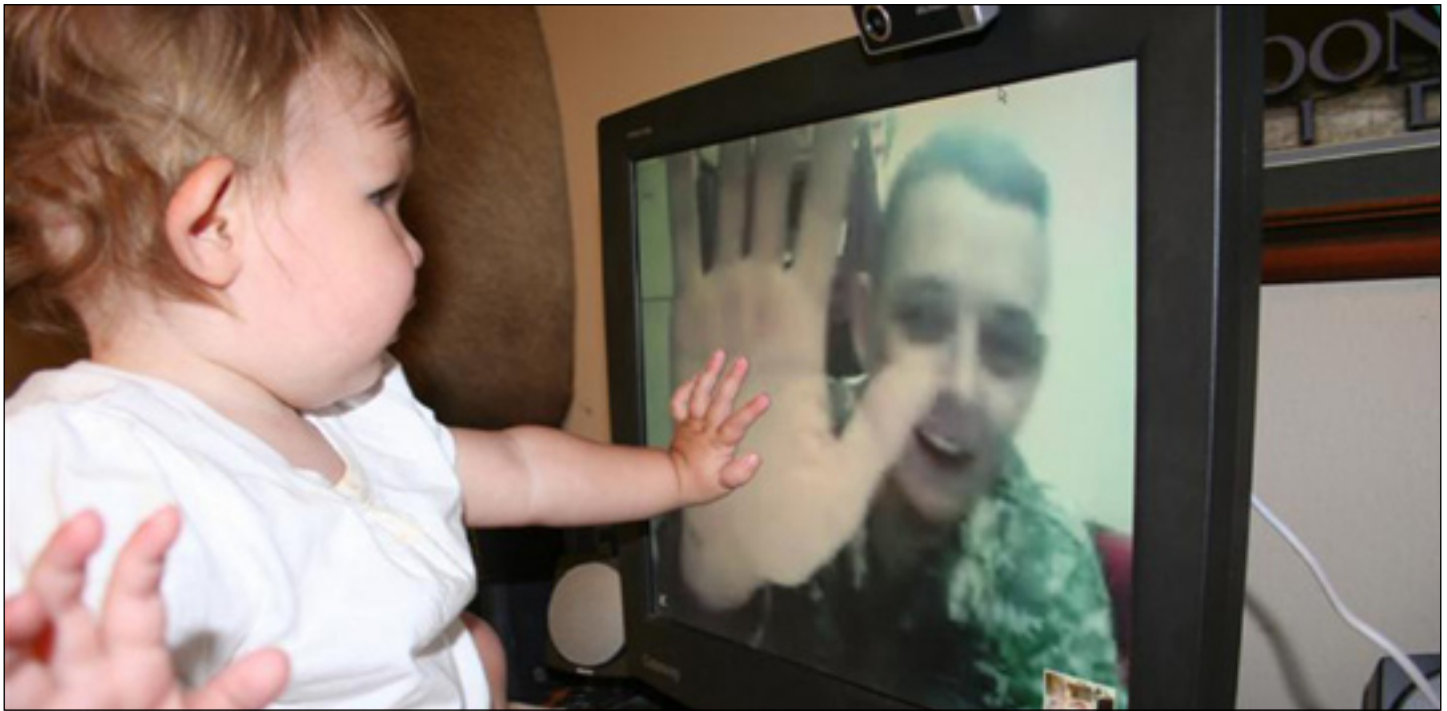
Counsel the rear detachment command team in writing and review the useful reference *U.S. Army Rear Detachment Commander’s Handbook* that they should keep close throughout the deployment. Involve the rear detachment in each component of the unit train up. For example, include the rear detachment in unit mission rehearsal exercises so events involve their actions and decision making as well. Rehearse and exercise battle drills such as casualty, serious injury of a spouse and Red Cross. Make sure these tasks are well-understood by both leaders in the rear detachment and forward unit. Do not allow the first time they are executed to be the real thing. These techniques early during the deployment cycle have a direct impact on a successful deployment and ultimately redeployment/reintegration.

Actions during deployment. The train up, deployment, relief-in-place and transfer of authority will go by rapidly at an astonishing pace. Soon enough, the unit will be conducting operations and focusing on mission accomplishment. During this phase in the deployment cycle, there are three areas of communication that not only support the mission, but also set conditions for successful reintegration — Soldier/family, engaged leaders and cross-talk between the forward unit and rear detachment.

Soldier/family. Communication between the Soldier and family is paramount and can take any form — phone, email or webcam. Although it varies based on services available in theater, encourage Soldiers to communicate with their families routinely and incorporate it into their battle rhythms. Family discussion on progress toward achieving those goals established before deployment is important and helps ease the separation. Discussion and appreciation of the challenges each side faces is healthy. Communication throughout deployment does not guarantee an easy deployment or reintegration, but it can facilitate success.

The unit can help them stay connected by something as simple as having routine family-oriented video teleconferences and an effective mail operation. In addition, photos or videos regularly published on a unit website or mailed back enable family members to see their loved ones in their environments. Letters sent by the command team to spouses or loved ones, such as mom or dad, highlighting positive events are also helpful. Communication also facilitates rumor control. Transparency in unclassified unit operations or decisions will fill a gap unfortunately filled by a rumor otherwise. Finally, sustaining battle buddies both forward and in the rear to include families is another safeguard to welfare. Battle buddies with the personal courage to help if a situation arises are a tremendous resource.

Engaged leaders. Active listening and counseling do not stop while deployed. Leaders must continue to be engaged with their Soldiers. Counseling requires focused discussion not only on performance, but also on concerns and stress that may impact performance. It requires leaders to understand Soldier fears, motivations, family background, domestic situation, goals, personalities, previous combat



LTC Nathan Blood, brigade effects coordinator for 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Multi-National Division–Baghdad, shares a high-five with his 16-month-old daughter, Mackenzie, during a web camera communication, Aug. 16, 2008. Blood was high-fiving Mackenzie from Forward Operating Base Loyalty, Iraq, and she returned it from Fort Polk, La. (Photo courtesy of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs)

experience and an appreciation of their stressors. Because of their involvement before deployment, the leader will have a good sense of their Soldiers' families. Engaged leaders will be conscious of their Soldier's change in behavior and involved to determine what may be troubling him. Leaders also must know the signs of stress not just in their Soldiers, but also in themselves.

Foster a desire within the team to win and actively maintain team morale through esprit de corps events. Continue to develop a sense of unit identity, and coach effective methods to deal with stress, such as physical training. Leaders can use the Unit Risk Reduction Leader Tip Card for reference when assessing Soldiers. R&R affords an opportunity to discuss some aspects of reintegration before and after leave is taken. R&R either may help reintegration or act as catalyst for problems later, but requires some preparation by leaders depending on a Soldier's situation. Be alert for distinct changes in behavior before and after R&R. As they did in garrison, leaders must closely track their "at risk" Soldiers. This is not "NCO business," but leader business. This does not mean those Soldiers are labeled or stigmatized. It simply means they may be carrying around added stressors that require additional leader focus. Include special emphasis for those involved in Family Advocacy Program before the deployment or involved in domestic incidents. Finally,

command team battlefield circulation will not only provide valuable tactical situational awareness, but also insights into unit morale and cohesion and offer Soldiers an opportunity to share concerns. Actively use the chaplain to assess the human dimension and as a directed telescope when necessary.

Cross-talk between forward unit and rear detachment. As part of the battle rhythm, there must be routine cross-talk between the forward and rear elements at both command and staff levels. Green-tab discussion and assessment does not happen only in theater. The rear detachment and family readiness group provide invaluable feedback on the health of families to forward leaders. As situations develop on either side, cross-talk on relevant information may enable problem-solving, kill rumors and avert potential problems, ultimately supporting reintegration. Throughout the deployment, situational awareness in areas such as R&R and incidents both in and out of theater help leadership be preventive rather than reactive, especially as redeployment approaches.

Redeployment and reintegration. Redeployment planning begins approximately four months out. Reintegration must be an integral portion of redeployment planning and requires the same focus. Coordination must be done to ensure the rear detachment and installation is prepared to receive the unit. Cross-talk

between forward and rear units becomes imperative as redeployment approaches. As the redeployment date draws closer, commanders must reassess their "at risk" Soldiers and determine those who may have readjustment problems whether domestic, financial, alcohol, drug or driving related. The rear detachment commander and first sergeant must all be conscious of "at risk" Soldiers and/or families and be prepared if a problem arises during reunion.

Once a detailed plan is in place, forward leaders can facilitate its success by ensuring their Soldiers accomplish the in theater pre-deployment and reintegration tasks and training. In theater training will facilitate leader discussion with Soldiers and set realistic reintegration expectations at the individual level. For predictability, Soldiers and families should know the reintegration training plan from the seven half day directed schedule through unit events and block leave. This will set expectations and limit frustration when they arrive at home station. They will need to understand the purpose of unit reintegration events to prevent a "check the block" mentality.

It is highly recommended that the rear detachment and family readiness group use Army Community Services and conduct redeployment and reunion training as well for family members also to set expectations. In addition, spouses should be informed on the unit's post-redeployment training plan after redeployment and the purpose

of events. Without this approach, spouses may become frustrated and question why their Soldier must report to work after being deployed for 12 months.

With reintegration training complete and expectations set, Soldiers and families are prepared for the reunion. Soldiers and families may experience a wide range of emotions before and during the reunion. According to the Deployment Guide for Families of Deploying Soldiers, there are five phases associated with reunion — pre-entry, reunion, disruption, communication and normal. (For more information on the emotional effects of deployment, see “The Emotional Cycle of Deployment,” by Kathleen Vestal Logan, in *Proceedings* and “Mission Readiness and Stress Management” by the United Nations Secretariat. For information on post-redeployment emotions, such as overcoming anger, sleeping better, spiritual fitness and handling stress, see www.afterdeployment.org and www.militaryonesource.com. There is a vast array of resources a Soldier or family member can download or order to include a 1-800 line for family members. Encourage Soldiers and families to understand the emotions tied to each phase.

As Soldiers, leaders will experience their own emotions and must balance them with the care of their Soldiers. After reunion, success continues with leader emphasis on post-redeployment training. Components of reintegration training vary slightly by major command, but Battlemind Training

I, “Transitioning from Combat to Home” and Battlemind Training II, “Continuing the Transition Home” is only helpful if taken seriously. During reintegration, the rear detachment maintains command and control to facilitate redeploying leaders also going through training and reunion. Ensure leader contact information and important numbers like the chaplain are updated and disseminated. To avoid alcohol-related incidents, leaders should address responsible drinking. The ubiquitous presence of alcohol may frustrate efforts, such as domestic incidents and driving under the influence, but ensuring Soldiers are reacquainted with responsible drinking will go a long way. Finally, be vigilant for warning signs such as serious financial difficulties, domestic challenges and a significant change in behavior.

Beyond reintegration — follow through. With formal reintegration training complete, complete reintegration is far from over. Deliberate preparation is conducted before anyone departs for block leave — risk assessments, counseling, refresher training for privately owned motorcycles, and license and insurance verification.

Before block leave. Pre-block leave safety briefs from the commander and command sergeant major allow Soldiers to hear the importance firsthand, but alone, do little in regard to block leave success. Coach leaders to understand that risk management must be thorough, assessed throughout the

planning process and continually updated as conditions change. Enforce the Travel Risk Planning System tool for those traveling. Identify hazards and implement controls to reduce risk associated with each Soldier travel plan. NCOs must talk with their Soldiers about the risks associated with drinking and driving, not wearing seatbelts and proper conduct of standards and discipline to prevent needless injury or loss of life. A system as simple as a safe ride program where members carry unit cards with chain of command contact information and local taxi numbers reduces risk of driving under the influence related incidents at home station. Keep money with the staff duty to help Soldiers get a safe taxi ride back on post.

Continue the command theme and understanding among Soldiers that they serve something greater than themselves; they represent their unit and the Army by their actions. Reinforce the message at every opportunity as you conduct routine safety and discipline briefs. Talk with Soldiers about the absolute tragedy of completing a successful mission in theater only to lose a Soldier to an unsafe act at home station. It is naïve to believe a leader can prevent every incident, but controls must be in place to reduce them.

As part of block leave preparation, leaders again reassess those “at risk” Soldiers to determine if additional measures must be employed. It includes Soldiers and families “at risk” due to stress incurred from redeployment, domestic friction, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol/drug abuse, traumatic brain injury or simply problems with readjusting. Incidents during reunion may require reassessment. Include Army suicide refresher training and have candid counseling and discussions with Soldiers about this sensitive topic. Ensure they understand there is no shame in seeking help; there is no stigma. There may be “at risk” Soldiers identified that have suicide stress factors. Leaders must look them in the eyes, ask the hard questions and get help if necessary. Simply listening will go a long way. Finally, explain to those warrior leaders who excelled in a combat environment, that deliberate pre-combat inspections are just as necessary before block leave as they were before a combat operation. Then, Soldiers can enjoy well-earned leave safely.

Post block leave. Once block leave is complete, commanders should reintegrate the unit thoroughly so they don’t have a combination of those that deployed, new Soldiers and rear detachment personnel. After a lengthy deployment and with key leader turnover, there may be a sense that



According to the Deployment Guide for Families of Deploying Soldiers, there are five phases associated with reunion — pre-entry, reunion, disruption, communication and normal. Pictured is the homecoming ceremony for B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 18th Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Okla., Aug. 12, 2009. (Photo courtesy of the Cannoneer)

it's permissible to relax standards and discipline because "we accomplished our mission." Although not spoken, this lax attitude can permeate a unit. With a clear chain of command in place, continue to enforce standards and discipline.

Many reintegration tasks and Soldier/family issues cross-over into Army Force Generation reset; follow-through to ensure successful completion. Too often, continuity is lost with leader changes. When leaders change, include a green-tab discussion on Soldiers into a deliberate transition timeline. For changes of command, leaders must ensure there is a thorough transition of critical information. "Essential elements of information include Soldier issues; high risk individuals; Soldier's medical issues (such as exposure to concussive events), known family issues, expectations regarding assignments and schooling, unit wounded warriors and gold star family members associated with the unit." (See General Peter Chiarelli, Memorandum for Senior Leaders dated 22 December 2009.)

Remember, the Army trend is a spike in incidents on or about redeployment plus 60 days. Do not assume drugs do not exist in your organization. Conduct aggressive, unpredictable urinalysis testing early and schedule military dogs for barracks inspections. Enforce leader presence in the barracks on weekends and holidays. Soldiers must reside in a safe, healthy living environment. Continue to follow those "at risk" who may need assistance and ensure plans are adequate to manage their stress effectively, such as counseling with a unit chaplain or brigade family life counselors.

Provide the unit an updated vision and goals. Establish a predictable battle rhythm and balance immediately after block leave. Soldiers and family members are sensitive to predictability especially after a long deployment. Publish a battle rhythm and training calendar so Soldiers and families have it. With block leave over, conduct family oriented events during the duty day; plan unit events where families are welcome. Families need to recover just as deliberately as your Soldiers and equipment.

Plan a redeployment event such as a dinner and make a big deal out of it for families. Recognize the many great people who made the unit mission a success such as family readiness group leaders and the rear detachment command team. Plan, resource and promote opportunities for married couples to strengthen their relationships and

single Soldiers to become reacquainted into healthy social activities. The Strong Bonds Program for single and married Soldiers is an excellent tool. Finally, restart and resource programs, such as Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, community volunteer initiatives and informal unit socials or team building events.

The Army exists to preserve peace and security, to implement national objectives, to serve and provide for the defense of the American people. These objectives have been accomplished for more than 234 years by the Army, during more than 183 campaigns. Our military forces are involved in Iraq and Afghanistan, conducting counter-terrorism and security operations. Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission decisions are being implemented through transformation, transitioning from a Cold War to expeditionary force and supporting homeland security. As it executes these vital tasks, it also must restore balance among an all volunteer force in an era of persistent conflict.

The next few years are critical as these programs come to fruition and

"Adaptable and resilient Soldiers and families do not happen by chance."

troop adjustments are made with Iraq and Afghanistan. Army leaders, beginning with first-line supervisor, appreciate the expeditionary nature of the Army and are eager to accomplish their missions. Inherent in the missions however, leaders must understand and address the human dimension — our Soldiers and families. Failure to appreciate a holistic approach to reintegration ultimately will diminish combat capability one Soldier, one family at a time. Adaptable and resilient Soldiers and families do not happen by chance. It requires Soldier commitment and continued earnest leader involvement throughout the deployment cycle.

According to a survey conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Army assistance with the deployment and reunion process can be helpful, but at this time, this assistance is not rated very highly by spouses. Similarly, unit support for families can be helpful in the reunion process, but this support is not considered to be very strong. It is clear from the data that significant gains in reunion adjustment can be fostered but more attention must be given to strengthening family, unit

and service systems support if these gains are to be realized." (Dennis K. Orthner, Ph.D. and Roderick Rose, M.S., "Reunion Adjustment among Army Civilian Spouses with Returned Soldiers," Army Family Reunion Report Orthner & Rose, 2005, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, December 2005. Although dated by four years, the findings are still relevant.) Reintegration must be done deliberately and with the same planning detail and execution focus as combat or stability operations.

This article does not contain any revelations. It simply highlights the significance of reintegration against a backdrop of an Army in flux. To underestimate the importance of a holistic approach to reintegration is to misjudge the challenge presently facing the Army in an era of persistent conflict. To simply wait until redeployment to address reintegration is shortsighted. The symptoms cannot be dismissed: suicide, substance abuse, divorce and increased behavioral health issues.

In addition to the many service programs in place, approaching reintegration holistically is a method at the tactical level to address these symptoms, and it begins upon unit notification of a deployment. Reintegration is not a panacea; it must be part of a comprehensive strategy. It requires critical thinking. Success involves implementation by the world's best NCO Corps. Success includes the same heightened sense of purpose, determination and proud tradition displayed throughout the Army's history. Ultimately, the spirit and strength of the Army Family will prevail. Leaders foster this strength, a faith in camaraderie, by demonstrating commitment in actions to Soldier and families.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Morrissey, air defense artillery, is the commander of 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Fort Lewis, Wash. He served as a congressional appropriations liaison, Washington, D.C.; a congressional fellow on the staff of a U.S. senator, Washington, D.C; executive officer for Task Force 1-18 Infantry, 1st Infantry Division in Tikrit, Iraq; and deputy G3, 1st Infantry Division, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. He also served as chief of plans, 1st Infantry Division, initially for Operation Joint Guardian, Kosovo Force then Army Force-Turkey as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom I; and battery commander of A Battery, 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, Kitzingen, Germany, in support of Operation Joint Endeavor/Joint Guard, Stabilization Force.